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Viewing cable 09ISLAMABAD270, CODEL BIDEN'S MEETING WITH COAS KAYANI AND ISI

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09ISLAMABAD270	2009-02-06 15:03	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET	Embassy Islamabad

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 ISLAMABAD 000270

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/06/2034

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SUBJECT: CODEL BIDEN'S MEETING WITH COAS KAYANI AND ISI

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S) Summary: Senators Biden and Graham met with Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Kayani and Director General of ISI LTGen Pasha on January 9 to underscore bipartisan support for the U.S.-Pakistan relationship. Senator Biden emphasized the need for the American people to see results soon in Afghanistan, and he wanted to be sure the U.S. and Pakistan had the same enemy as we moved forward. Senator Biden sought Kayani's views about what kind of Afghanistan would represent success for Pakistan.

¶2. (S) Kayani said the U.S. and Pakistan were on the same page, but there would be tactical differences. Cooperation with U.S. military, with whom he had excellent relations, had improved. Kayani stressed the military's support for Pakistan's civilian government. He described his campaign in Bajaur and plans to confront the insurgents in the rest of the tribal agencies. Kayani said he urgently needed help for internally displaced persons (IDPs). Kayani was candid that the government has essentially abandoned the Swat valley. Senator Graham emphasized the need to prosecute the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) leaders involved in the Mumbai attacks and to incorporate the tribal agencies into Pakistan's legal system. End summary.

¶3. (S) Senator Joseph Biden (D-DE) and Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC), accompanied by Ambassador and Senate Foreign Relations Committee Staff Director Antony Blinken, met with COAS Kayani and DG ISI Pasha January 9 for ninety minutes. Senator Biden asked Kayani to describe his view of a stable Afghanistan.

¶4. (S) Senator Graham added his presence emphasized bipartisan support for Pakistan. (He had just visited Pakistan three weeks ago.) Senator Graham said he was going to support the Biden-Lugar bill, but he needed to convince his constituents of the value of investing in schools in Pakistan instead of South Carolina. Pakistan needed to prosecute those involved in the Mumbai attacks and be seen as a country that observed the rule of law.

¶5. (S) Kayani replied that Pakistan and the US had a convergence of interests. Kayani's goal was a peaceful, friendly and stable Afghanistan. Kayani said he had no desire to control Afghanistan. In fact, he said, anyone who wanted to control Afghanistan was ignorant of history, since no one has ever controlled it. Kayani noted there had been confusion about the policy of "strategic depth" but for him "strategic depth" meant a peaceful Afghanistan "on his back." But the Pashtuns have to be accommodated, Kayani added. Biden asked if Kayani made a distinction between the Pashtuns and the Taliban. Kayani replied that the Taliban were a reality, but the Afghan government dominated by the Taliban had had a negative effect on Pakistan.

¶6. (S) Kayani recalled he told Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Admiral Mullen that the U.S. needed realistic expectations of what the Pakistani military could achieve and that these expectations had to be clearly articulated. Kayani described his campaign in Bajaur and his plans to confront the insurgents in other tribal agencies, but he repeatedly said he had capacity problems, particularly regarding equipment. Kayani said he needed urgent support for the 150,000 people displaced from the fighting. He said the military had undertaken hundreds of sorties in Bajaur, and the population of Bajaur was so far supportive of the military efforts. Senator Graham mentioned the success of the CERP program in Iraq and Afghanistan which had put money in the hands of commanders for urgent community needs.

¶7. (S) Kayani recounted the situation in Swat in which the provincial government had made accommodations with the militants, requiring the army to retake the area repeatedly. Kayani also said the population, once it saw the army pull out, was far less likely to support it the second time

around. The military had to be followed by civilian agencies or the local support would diminish.

¶8. (S) Kayani said military efforts needed the political support of the civilian government. He recalled that when

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the Federal Investigative Agency headquarters in Lahore had been hit by suicide bombers, the citizens of Lahore had demonstrated against the government rather than against the suicide bombers. While the army had sent the message in Bajaur that it meant business, there had to be follow-up support from the civilian agencies. Kayani said as his campaign moved through the tribal agencies, the army should ideally need to use diminishing force. When they have to fight for the same ground repeatedly, it becomes increasingly difficult and demoralizing to the troops.

¶9. (S) Senator Biden asked Kayani if he had the capacity and could obtain sufficient resources, would he then move against Taliban leaders like Baitullah Mehsud, Commander Nazir, and the Haqqanis? Senator Biden asked Kayani if he were prepared to move into the Waziristans.

¶10. (S) Kayani replied that Bajaur had been the "hardest nut to crack" militarily: the Pakistani military had undertaken an operation in South Waziristan last October, but the army had moved out because of the elections. The Pakistani military had also had a fort in the middle of Waziristan which had been cut off by militants. Kayani said he was painfully aware that the army had to retake South Waziristan since ninety percent of the suicide bombers came from Baitullah Mehsud. "He has to be cut down to size," said Kayani.

¶11. (S) But, Kayani said, the Pakistani military could not fight everyone at once. They would have to go after Mehsud and Nazir sequentially (a point Pasha confirmed). Biden said it was important to be in agreement on this issue. Pasha said the United States and Pakistan needed to have confidence in each other. Pasha said he was hurt about the inference that he did not have a relationship of trust with CIA. He had gone to Washington for a frank talk with CIA Director Hayden and he often briefed, and sought the advice of, the RAO Chief in Islamabad. Senator Biden repeated he was not going to revisit the past. Pasha replied that there was no reason for ISI to be protecting "these people" and he had no interest in saving them.

¶12. (S) Senator Biden said he needed to know that the situation had changed. Senator Biden said he understood that the Pakistani military lacked capacity, but would the situation change if they had additional resources? It was important to know if we had the same enemy: the U.S. needed to be able to make an objective assessment of Pakistan's part of the bargain. Graham added that "General Musharraf had cut deals, but those deals didn't work out."

¶13. (S) Kayani repeated there had been considerable cooperation on the technical level with U.S. forces. But this did not mean that there would not be differences of opinion on tactics. On Afghanistan, Kayani stressed) "past, present, and future" -- we are on the same page.

¶14. (S) Regarding LeT, Kayani said Pakistan would not allow small groups to dictate state policy. Pakistan had not waited for evidence and they had moved immediately. The information they had now was based on confessions. Pakistan needed Indian cooperation to move the investigation forward. Kayani also insisted that any information available about upcoming attacks be shared with Pakistan. He understood that information about the attack had been provided to India but not to Pakistan. He said repeated discussion about "the next attack and all bets were off" only provided an incentive for another attack. Biden said that what was important was Pakistan's action against LeT and similar organizations. Senator Biden said he would share what he had heard with

Admiral Mullen and emphasized the need for results.

¶15. (S) General Kayani said he appreciated the Senators' frank response. He repeated his need for help with IDPs. Senator Biden said the system of reimbursement through Coalition Support Funds would be reexamined. Kayani said that the military had only received about \$300 million of the \$1 billion ostensibly reimbursed for military expenses. He was not implying that the money had been stolen, but had been used for general budget support.

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¶16. CODEL Biden has cleared this message.
PATTERSON